

Fact Sheet

Primary Care Providers

Limited access to specialist care remains a major barrier to health care in Canada. The consultation-referral process is complex and involves many factors that can limit the effectiveness and efficiency of patient care. These factors include:

- Long wait times before specialist advice is received/implemented
- Discovering during the visit that preliminary tests should have been ordered, requiring a second visit
- Discovering during the visit that patient issues are better suited to a different type of specialist
- Delayed communication
- Logistical challenges and expenses for the patients

The Champlain BASE (Building Access to Specialists through eConsultation) eConsult Service:

- Is a secure web-based tool that allows primary care providers (PCPs) quick access to speciality care for their patients
- Is easy to use and only requires a standard computer and 30 minutes of virtual training
- Was developed here in the Champlain region by family physician/researcher Dr. Clare Liddy and endocrinologist Dr. Erin Keely in collaboration with the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), Bruyère Research Institute, Bruyère Continuing Care, The Ottawa Hospital, and the Winchester District Memorial Hospital
- Provides patient-specific advice to PCPs in place of a face-to-face specialist consultation
- Provides patient-specific advice to PCPs for further investigations or treatment options before a face-to-face consultation, resulting in fewer visits to the specialists
- Provides opportunity for specialists to transition the care of patients back to the PCP community, with an enhanced confidence in the transition process, which promotes continuity of care and follows best practices
- Is continually evaluated to ensure ongoing quality improvement and ensuring the service continues to meet the needs of patients and healthcare professionals

Benefits for the Primary Care Provider

- Receive answers quickly to non-urgent questions (average time to response = 2 days), often avoiding the need for the patient to be referred for a face-to-face visit
- Provides information targeted to the patient, providing better care
- If a face-to-face referral is needed, any additional diagnostic tests, courses for treatment, etc., may be requested and completed before the appointment, leading to a more effective specialist visit
- Provides access to over 60 specialty services
- Responsive to the needs of the primary care provider

“Thanks very much to the cardiologist for the clear answers and great explanations/interpretations of her symptoms and diagnostic testing! It’s great learning for me (the PCP) and it saves the patient from having to go out to a specialist appointment.”

- PCP, Ottawa, 2014

Clare Liddy
Primary Care Lead
cliddy@bruyere.org

613-562-6262, Ext. 2928

Erin Keely
Specialist Lead
ekeely@toh.on.ca

613-738-8400, Ext. 81941

Amir Afkham
Engagement &
Implementation Lead
Amir.Afkham@lhins.on.ca

613-747-3235

